Harvesting Tobacco.

The tobacco harvest in my section usually begins in August. The work of worming and suckering must be actively kept up to that period, and even beyond at intervals until every plant has been put in the curing house. About six or eight weeks after the tobacco has been topped the leaves assume a yellowish, mottled color. There is a granulated appearance on the upper surface of the leaves that cannot be misunderstood by the experienced tobacco grower. When a portion of the leaf fully ripe is bent between the thumb and forefinger, it snaps with a clean-cut break.

The plants in the same field rarely mature at the same time. The difference in surface exposure, in the quality of the soil, and in the cultivation of the crop makes a difference sometimes of eight to fifteen days in the time of ripening. All hills that are replanted (the first plants having died) will carry unripe plants. Generally the time of the first cutting will find about half the plants ready for the harvest, and these are selected and the immature ones are left. If, however, the land is uniform in fertility, the surface level, the cultivation in every respect equal, and the stand of plants of the first setting perfect, the whole field will be ready for the knife at the same period.

If there should be any doubt in the mind of the tobacco grower as to the full maturity of the crop, it is best to let it remain for a few days longer, because the last few days store up the gums and resins or fatty matter in the leaves that make them so valuable. The leaves attain their full expansion in a good season in about six weeks. After this they thicken and grow fat under the fructifying influences of copious dews and hot suns. The tobacco grower should always bear in mind that there is as much difference between the taste and fragrance of ripe tobacco and green as there is between a ripe apple, with its sacharine juices, and a green one with its acidity.

No tobacco should be cut directly after a hard rain, because much of the gummy matter which is secreted in the upper surface of the leaves, and which adds so much to the weight and aroma of the cured product, is dissolved and washed off by a copious rainfall. Nor should it be cut when there is probability of a rain, for the reason that if caught in a shower after it has been cut, it is bespattered with dirt and its value much impaired. Nor should it be cut while the dew is on the plant, for when turned over after the stalk is severed a considerable amount of dirt will adhere to the wet leaves. The best time for cutting it in the afternoon, when the fierceness of the noonday heat has been tempered by the declining sun. Every exertion should be made to prevent "sunburn" —that is, a scorching or rapid drying of the leaves by the sun. Such spots as are thus produced will always remain green, or at least off-color.

The best instrument with which to cut tobacco is a butcher knife of medium size, with a thin, sharp blade about six inches long. The handle should be well wrapped with old rags, or else the hand will be made to suffer by the continual pressure upon the back of a hard wooden handle. The person doing the cutting stands over the plant, and placing the blade of the knife at right angles, or approximately so to the upper leaves, splits the stalk to within a few inches of the lower leaves. Then withdrawing the knife and grasping the plant midway with his left hand, he inserts the knife beneath the lower leaves and severs the stalk. The plant is then reversed and made to stand in the row. Here it remains until it wilts, which requires, according to the character of the weather, from fifteen minutes to an hour. Should it be cloudy and rainy it will not wilt sufficiently to handle without breakage until the rain ceases. It sometimes gets into what tobacco farmers call a "strut," when it becomes as tender as the most crisp celery.

When the plants have wilted properly they are straddled over tobacco sticks, from five to eight plants being placed on a stick, and in this condition they are carried to the curing house. The tobacco sticks are about 4½ feet long, with an average of some two inches wide by 1½ inches thick, rived out of red oak or hickory. They should be well seasoned before being put to use.—Col. J. B. Killebrew, Nashville, Tenn.

Bamboo Culture for Farmers.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

One of the new industries for the American farmer is bamboo raising. During the past few years he has learned to raise rice cheaper than the Chinese, Sumatra wrapper tobacco as good as that grown in the far east, figs that rival those in Smyrna, and macaroni wheat comparable with that of Italy. He is now about to turn his attention to the bamboo and its cultivation. This plant, contrary to the idea of many people, does not like Topsy, "jes grow." It requires care the same as any other crop. The profits of bamboo culture are worthy of consideration. In Japan, where the industry is well developed, the proceeds amount on an average to $50 per acre. Very few farms in this country pay at such a rate. A well drained soil, of rich stiff loam, lightened with a mixture of sand, is necessary for the bamboo. A favorite site for the growth is the base of some range of hills, or a broad valley where some mountain stream has brought down and deposited a mass of alluvium. These situations have the double advantage of suitable soil and shelter from strong winds. The banks of small streams, deltas of rivers, borders of ponds, and low, irrigated islands, will produce big forests of this valuable plant. Most bamboos will not withstand much drought, but if they are supplied with plenty of water, their leaves will keep green in a fairly dry climate. They are hardy plants and many of the Japanese species experience a temperature of 15 degrees below the freezing point without injury. In the United States thousands of suitable locations may be found in California, Oregon, Texas, and through the Gulf and Southern States.

TODD.

Washington, D. C.

NEW TRUCKING DEVELOPMENTS.

Cucumber Raising Pays $100 Per Acre—One Farmer Puts 900 Acres in Watermelons—Tobacco in Anson.

A local item in the Observer two weeks ago stated that in the vicinity of Maxton, on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, 400 acres have been planted in cucumbers for the Heinz Pickle Company, of Pittsburg. It develops on inquiry that this is only a partial statement of the facts. It is only one item in the great development of the trucking interests in Richmond, Scotland and Robeson Counties, where the land owners along the Seaboard Air Line Railroad have made a new departure, and, it appears, a very profitable one. The lands in that section are known to be the finest cotton lands in this section of the South, but they have been found to be still better adapted to the growing of truck.

The centre of the new cucumber industry is in the vicinity of Clarkton, where 400 acres are planted in cucumbers under a purchase guarantee by Heinz. It is said that these farmers are sure of $100 an acre on their cucumbers. The Maxton farm is the individual enterprise of Mr. H. J. McKinnon, who cultivated his cucumbers independently of any contract with Heinz, and who has already netted $100 an acre on his venture.

The farmers around Clarkton were slow to take hold of the Heinz project, but under the encouragement and personal backing of Messrs. Neill Curry and O. L. Clarke, two big merchants of that place, they planted their lands in cucumbers. The Heinz Company has built pickling tanks at Clarkton of sufficient capacity to take care of all the cucumbers raised. All the farmers have to do is to deliver their product and get their money. Then, the season for the planting and maturing of the cucumbers being short, they can plant their lands in a second crop. Less labor is required for the cultivation of this vegetable than is necessary for a cotton crop, and the net profit is much larger.

The raising of cucumbers is not the only new departure of the farmers in that section. Much of the land heretofore cultivated in cotton is now planted in watermelons. In the vicinity of Laurinburg, Mr. Matthews has a watermelon farm covering 900 acres. Other farmers are raising watermelons on a smaller scale.

Still another new departure is the cultivation of tobacco. Morven, in Anson County, is the centre of this new industry. The farmers of that section have planted their lands extensively in tobacco, and the result is said to be encouraging. A tobacco warehouse will be built at Morven for the marketing of the crop. The soil around Morven is said to have the same characteristics as the famous tobacco-growing soil of Wilson County, and the quality of the crop grown by Anson County farmers this season is pronounced by experts to be equal to the Wilson County leaf. These three new crops along the Seaboard—cucumbers, watermelons and tobacco—are expected to bring the growers larger bank accounts than they have known in many years, and in a short while put them on a solid basis of prosperity. In the meantime, they have not overlooked their opportunities as cotton growers. Land not heretofore cultivated has been planted in that staple, and their cotton crop will be about as large as usual. They are simply making money on cucumbers and watermelons while the cotton crop is maturing.—Charlotte Observer.

A Batch of Timely Farm Notes.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

Experiments tried by the Agricultural Department in growing silk worms on orange trees and hedges are unsatisfactory. The white mulberry is the proper tree. The Department is continuing its experiment in silk production with considerable promise of success.

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The value of alfalfa as a stock feed is shown by a sixty-day winter hog-feeding test, conducted in Kansas, starting with 125 pound pigs. Those receiving Kafir corn-meal, fed dry, but with water at hand, gained during the two months, an average of 52 pounds each, while those fed the same ration, mixed wet, gained 63 pounds. Those, however, which were fed the mixed ration of Kafir corn and alfalfa hay gained 91 pounds, or one and one-half pounds a day. They were fed all the corn they would eat without waste, and an excess of hay so that they consumed of the latter only the leaves and small stems.

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"The Wisconsin Farmer" says that not many farmers are willing ot give up the use of their land for a year, as is necessary when the system is adopted of building up worn-out lands and plowing under green crops. Nature seems to have a way of largely evening things up. In the North where the seasons are too short to allow the growth of more than one crop the heavy freezes lock in the soil the fertility, which in the South is largely washed away during the colder and rainy months. On the other hand the Southern half of the United States is able to enrich its soil by growing two crops annually. Wherever crimson clover will thrive no farmer who wants to green manure need lose the use of his land for a year. This annual legume can be sown in the corn rows in late August or early September following a drenching rain, and with ordinary luck will make a luxuriant growth during the fall, winter and spring and be ready to turn under for the next regular spring crop.

GUY E. MITCHELL.

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that there is none.—Ruskin.